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Readings Booklet

June 1994



English 33

Part B: Reading

Grade 12 Diploma Examination

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June 1994

**English 33 Part B: Reading
Readings Booklet
Grade 12 Diploma Examination**

Description

Part B: Reading contributes 50% of the total English 33 Diploma Examination mark.

There are 8 reading selections in the Readings Booklet and 70 questions in the Questions Booklet.

Time allotted: 2 hours. You may take an additional 1/2 hour to complete the examination if needed.

Instructions

- Be sure that you have an English 33 Readings Booklet **and** an English 33 Questions Booklet.
- You may **not** use a dictionary, thesaurus, or other reference materials.



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I. Questions 1 to 8 in your Questions Booklet are based on this story.

LONNIE COMES HOME

When Lonnie came home from Dorchester his face and arms were the colour of butternuts. His sun tan astonished everybody in Hainesville. We'd always thought that men came out of prison with skins as white as the belly of a fish. In all the stories we'd heard or read, ex-convicts had something called "prison pallor." And here was Lonnie looking as if he'd spent weeks stripped to the waist, working in the hayfields.

Nobody could ask him about it, of course. Nobody ever asked Lonnie any questions about the penitentiary. What can you ask a man who has just finished a three-year term for something called "conspiracy to commit armed robbery"?

10 Everybody in Hainesville treated Lonnie just as if he'd never been away.

Old Fitz Mosher, the station agent, for instance. Fitz was the first person Lonnie met when he got off the train. Lonnie was wearing a blue serge suit and lugging an old army kit bag. "They give them a new suit and a ten dollar bill when they get out. Leastways that's what I've always heard," Fitz commented later. "Anyway, Lonnie started to go by me, lookin' kinda shamefaced and sulky. And I walked right over to him and said, 'Hello, Lonnie, how are you makin' it?' just as if he'd never been away. And he looked sorta surprised and said, 'Hi, Fitz,' just like that, 'Hi Fitz,' he says. And I says 'Pretty hot day, Lonnie.' And he says, 'Yeah. It sure is, Fitz.' We walked along just as if he'd just happened along to pass the time of day."

20 Everybody in Hainesville acted the same way. Lonnie didn't have any trouble getting his old job back at the feed mill. "Ain't nothin' really bad in the boy," Henry Douglas explained. "I was glad enough to get him back. Lonnie ain't lazy. And he never stole anythin' from *me*. I put him right back on the payroll—thirty bucks a week. I acted just like he'd never been away. Never mentioned a word about the pen. Didn't figure it was any of my business. I just said, 'Still want to work for me, Lonnie?' and he said, 'Yes.' That's all there was to it. See him a hundred times a day when we're loadin' box-cars or he's runnin' the mixer and never mention the pen. Never say a word about it. Treat him just the same as I always did. Act just like he'd never been away."

30 We think we're pretty good folks in Hainesville when it comes right down to it. In lots of places, people would have never let Lonnie forget he'd been in penitentiary. They'd have asked him questions about it, maybe made sarcastic remarks to his face. We just forgot about the past. Lonnie stayed here six months after he got out of Dorchester and in all that time nobody mentioned the pen to

Continued

him. Not once. We're that kind of people.

Lonnie went back to work at Henry Douglas's feed mill and boarded at the Chisholms' and went to the dances in Larchmont on Friday nights with the other young fellows. He'd never been wild, which was one reason why nobody could
40 ever understand how he'd gotten mixed up in that robbery in the first place. Some said he'd thought it was a joke and some said he'd been drunk. But, of course, nobody ever asked him.

At first he didn't act much different than he'd acted before he went to the penitentiary. He was a quiet, slow-moving, hard-working boy who liked the
45 occasional good time. But, gradually, he began behaving strangely. He had sulking spells and there were times when he'd barely grunt when somebody spoke to him. He stopped going to the dances. Sometimes he didn't show up at the Chisholms' all night. There were rumours that he hitch-hiked over to Bennington and got drunk all by himself. In a little place like Hainesville, things like that start
50 people talking. But nobody knew for sure until that afternoon he showed up drunk at the feed mill.

He hadn't come to work that morning and Henry Douglas had telephoned the Chisholm house and learned that he'd stayed out all night. "I wouldn't have fired him though," Henry said afterwards. "Lonnie was a good worker. I figure a man
55 has a right to go on a jag once in a while. Then, of course, Lonnie had had enough trouble to make a man want to get drunk—not that I ever mentioned the pen to him. I never did. That's why I couldn't figure out what he was so mad at when he came roarin' in that afternoon."

Lonnie staggered into the office of the feed mill about three o'clock. He was
60 drunk and his overalls were so muddy it looked as if he'd laid down in the ditch and rolled in it. Henry and three or four other men were sitting around the office talking feed prices. Afterwards they all spoke about how calm Henry acted when Lonnie staggered in like that. He just looked up and said, "Hello, Lonnie."

"Hello, Lonnie," Lonnie mocked him. And his eyes were blazing.
65 "I guess you can have the rest of the day off, Lonnie. Come back to work in the morning," Henry told him, calmly.

"Listen, what's wrong with you guys?" Lonnie snarled. "What's wrong with all you damn fools? I was in the pen three years. You know that? You know
70 what it's like in the pen? And I come back here after three years and everybody acts as if I'd just come back from havin' a tooth filled in Larchmont. You guys crazy or somethin'? Don't you know I been in the pen?"

"Sure, we know, Lonnie, sure we know," Henry said, trying to soothe him.

"Sure we know, Lonnie," Lonnie repeated. "Sure we know. Then why don't you ask me about it? I bet you talk about it plenty. Why don't you ask me what it

Continued

75 was like in the pen? No, you wouldn't do that, none of you. Look, you know
what it's like to get a fish bone or somethin' stuck in your throat and you cough
and cough and you can't get it out no matter how much you try? You know what
it's like when you're sick to your stomach and want to throw up but you can't?
You ever felt like that? Well, listen, that's the way I've felt for six months. It's
80 been worse than the pen. Look, why couldn't you say just once, 'Lonnie, what
was it like in the pen?' Why couldn't you ask me that just once?"
"You're a little drunk, Lonnie. You'd better go home," Henry said.
"Nobody ever asked me once," Lonnie said.
He turned and lurched out without even stopping to collect his pay. That
85 night he caught the train to Halifax and nobody in Hainesville has ever heard of
him since.

Alden Nowlan
Canadian poet and writer (1933–1983)

II. Questions 9 to 15 in your Questions Booklet are based on this poem.

THE MOUSE ON THE BRIDGE

Half way across the bridge
over the Saskatchewan River
I see scurrying in front of me
one small mouse.

- 5 He's less frightened than I might have expected:
I almost think he's going to wait for me,
but he whisks himself behind the railing
and out of sight.

- What's he doing here anyway
10 breathing in the exhaust
from moving vans and buses
and deafened by the roar of motorcycles?
Does he have a nest here,
or is he travelling,
15 wanting to see what it's like on the other side?

- I remember seeing New Brunswick fieldmice
running from the blades of mowing machines
like the mouse in Robert Burns's poem
or being pounced on in the barn
20 by the big black barn cat.

- And I remember mice in old farmhouses
squeaking and chattering
(one of them, when I was a child, once stood observantly
watching me take a bath
25 in the old round tub in the kitchen)

But I don't associate mice
with city traffic
and wonder how long his little nerves will take it.

Continued

At least he's had the common sense, or luck,
30 to choose the sidewalk, not the main road,
and may not be in much danger
unless he's fool enough to want to cross
in front of a motorcycle.

Why worry about him?
35 Mice have never had easy lives.
A nest on the edge of the bridge
is as good as a nest anywhere

no doubt as natural for him
as my nest in a highrise
40 teetering perched
above birds and traffic

or banks and office buildings
or rows of classrooms
like cubical cages
45 fitted with all the equipment
any creature in captivity
could possibly want.

Elizabeth Brewster
Canadian poet and novelist
She taught at the University of Alberta from 1968 to 1972
and currently teaches at the University of Saskatchewan

III. Questions 16 to 25 in your Questions Booklet are based on the following excerpt from a play.

from AFTER ABRAHAM

CHARACTERS:

AN ANGLICAN BISHOP—bishop of the Church of England

JAMES WOLFE—general commanding the British army at the battle of the Plains of Abraham, 1759

THE MARQUIS DE MONTCALM—general commanding the French army at the battle of the Plains of Abraham, 1759

The site of the battle is on the north shore of the St. Lawrence River where Quebec City stands today. As a result of their victory in this battle, the British gained the upper hand in North America. However, the French culture remained vibrant in North America, and Canada's development as a nation was greatly influenced by the interplay between French and British cultures.

The stage is in darkness. Slowly and from a long way off, the sound of a tumult grows. Wild cheering, hysterical wailing and sobbing, and an agony of church bells are heard. As the sound starts to fade, light rises on the figure of a BISHOP. He is standing in a pulpit with his back turned to the audience. He is speaking to a congregation even further beyond and in darkness. His voice echoes with precise and magnificent English upper class authority.

BISHOP: And so, dearly beloved brethren, General Wolfe has been taken to his final rest. Even at the time of triumph, that sacred instant when all the sublime forces of God, history and high destiny had come together in the blinding ecstasy of victory, even then was the hero of Quebec struck down. The bullet of a cowardly assassin shattered his pure and alabaster temple and he was no more. . . . GENERAL JAMES WOLFE *appears from the shadows. This is WOLFE “out of time”—his spirit, shade, alter-ego, what you will. He moves to centre stage and stands with his back turned to the audience, listening to the BISHOP.*

BISHOP: Even with deepest joy comes darkest tragedy. From heights of glory, we descend to awful glooms of despair. For this young warrior, whom nations less civilized, less moderate than our own might know as prince, as saint, as very demi-god, but whom we, as befits our ruddy Island Liberty, would simply call a gallant English gentleman, this General Wolfe has delivered to his country a soldier's finest gifts—his victory and his life.

Continued

15 *The MARQUIS DE MONTCALM appears from the shadows. This is the “spirit” MONTCALM, in the same sense as WOLFE. He moves to somewhere near WOLFE and stands, hands on hips, also looking at the BISHOP.*

BISHOP: But even while we weep, we must yet rejoice. From the continent of North America, the hand of the tyrant has been wrenched forever. The
20 bloody, papist¹ French, with their Indian creatures,² will wreak terror and death to our peaceful colonies no more. Liberty, commerce and the true faith will now walk hand in hand to make of America another Eden.³ For this, and for that Eden’s saviour, General James Wolfe, I bid you now to bow your heads in prayer. . . .

25 *As the BISHOP bows his head, MONTCALM moves in closer to WOLFE, smiling faintly.*

MONTCALM: Well, I must say you did better than I.

WOLFE is not surprised by this. He glances at MONTCALM and then back at the BISHOP.

30 **WOLFE:** They’ve got it all wrong.

MONTCALM: Mind you, I’m not surprised. I seem to remember that men admire victory more than defeat.

WOLFE: Bullet through the temple, indeed! Is there never to be accuracy in dispatches?

35 **MONTCALM:** A bullet through the temple is more romantic, perhaps, than a ball in the belly.

WOLFE: Romantic? Is that any way for a civilized nation to report a war?

MONTCALM (*Shrugging*): In America, General, there were no civilized nations!

WOLFE is startled and looks at MONTCALM squarely for the first time.

40 *MONTCALM raises a hand to check his indignation.*

MONTCALM: No, not you. Or us, either. In Europe, there are civilized nations, and civilized battles. But America made barbarians of us all. Why, by all proper standards, both you and I shouldn’t even have been scratched! But one could never get it through their heads that it simply isn’t done to shoot at
45 generals.

WOLFE nods in morose agreement, then his expression changes.

WOLFE: Where are we?

MONTCALM: Who cares? At least, finally, there is no pain.

WOLFE laughs bitterly and with just a shade of self-conscious heroism.

Continued

¹papist—Roman Catholic; used in a derogatory sense

²Indian creatures—the Bishop sees the Indian allies of the French as being the *creations* of the French; that is, he believes that the French are responsible for the actions of their Indian allies

³Eden—Garden of Eden, earthly paradise

- 50 WOLFE: Pain? My God, I've lived with pain ever since I can remember. Pain is
a way of life.
- MONTCALM: Do you feel any now?
- WOLFE (*With considerable surprise*): No! Where are we?
- MONTCALM: I think we are—*after*.
- 55 WOLFE: After what?
- MONTCALM: Everything. Or before it. Or perhaps outside.
- WOLFE: My God, man, no wonder your battle tactics were such a shambles.
- MONTCALM: Then you tell me where we are.
- WOLFE (*With disarming candour*): Damned if I know.
- 60 MONTCALM (*Smiling*): Perhaps that's what we are—damned!
- WOLFE: Papist rot!
- MONTCALM: A joke. Perhaps—it is simply *over*!
- WOLFE (*Suddenly, surprisingly*): Or not begun.
- MONTCALM (*With new respect*): Yes!
- 65 *The two GENERALS study each other silently.*
- WOLFE: So, Marquis Montcalm, we meet at last.
- MONTCALM *bows with kindly but mocking formality*.
- MONTCALM: General Wolfe, your servant, sir.
- WOLFE: I often wondered what you were like.
- 70 MONTCALM: I will confess to a similar curiosity.
- WOLFE: All those months—and never to come face to face with one's adversary.
- MONTCALM: Was it an irony? Or a blessing?
- WOLFE: Once I studied you for a goodly half hour, through a glass.⁴
- MONTCALM: What did you think of your opponent?
- 75 WOLFE: You looked disgustingly healthy.
- MONTCALM: An illusion. Our rations were worse than yours.
- WOLFE: Impossible.
- MONTCALM: Well—that is all past.
- WOLFE: Or continuing!
- 80 MONTCALM: Or yet to come!
- WOLFE: Yes. . . . You know—the result was inevitable.
- MONTCALM: Of the battle? A fluke!
- WOLFE: Of the war! Inevitable!
- They begin to move together towards the shadows.*
- 85 MONTCALM: With twenty Englishmen on the continent to every Frenchman, that
is hardly surprising.

Continued

⁴glass—telescope

WOLFE: I didn't say it was surprising, merely inevitable. And permit me to remind you, Marquis, that nineteen out of the twenty Englishmen you mention were not English at all, but Americans.

90 **MONTCALM:** Forgive me, but nine-tenths of my Frenchmen were Americans too.

WOLFE (*Staring*): What on earth do you mean?

MONTCALM: French Americans. Habitants. Dyed with the same intransigence⁵ and contempt for authority as your people from Boston and New York.

95 **WOLFE** (*Sighing*): You're right. America certainly is the graveyard of civilization.

MONTCALM (*Excitedly*): It poisons all it touches. A man cannot go to North America without being tainted. And to be *born* there is to be little better than a savage. I've always been loyal to my country, but as far as I am concerned you English can have the whole continent and welcome.

100 *They begin to fade off.*

WOLFE: I have the feeling it's going to cause us trouble.

MONTCALM: Cause it? *It is* it! The Spanish discovered that and so did we. And you will too, before very long. Inevitable, as you said. Mark my words, all Europe would be better off if that busybody Columbus had stayed at home.

105 **WOLFE:** He was a man of curiosity. That was probably inevitable too.

MONTCALM: The problem with the inevitable is that its obviousness is almost invariably confined to afterwards.

WOLFE (*Confused*): I beg your pardon?

MONTCALM: Never mind. For us at least, it's over.

110 **WOLFE** (*Wryly*): Perhaps. . . .

The lights and scene begin to change as the "spirits" depart.

BISHOP (*On the pulpit, finishing his silent prayer*): Amen!

WOLFE: It begins.

MONTCALM: The end must begin somewhere.

115 **WOLFE:** Precisely!

They are gone.

Ron Chudley

Actor, playwright, and script writer

He was born in New Zealand in 1937 and moved to Canada in 1964

After Abraham was his first play

⁵intransigence—refusal to compromise or agree

IV. Questions 26 to 35 in your Questions Booklet are based on this article.

TAX RICH NATIONS, SAVE THE JUNGLE

It's an historic day in a Third World nation: after years of politicking and painstaking research, a tropical rain forest becomes a national park. Conservationists around the world celebrate their victory in saving a priceless storehouse of plants and animals.

10 Five years later, poachers take the park's last surviving leopard. Or illegal loggers destroy a unique area of trees with all its associated plants and animals. Or ranchers graze cattle on the anemic soil of burned-over land.

This is the tragedy of the "paper park," caused by a serious flaw in the efforts of conservationists. In
20 creating preserves, they fail to compensate developing nations for losing the use of resources. As a result, a developing nation's rain forests become casualties in a people's battle to improve their lives.

There is only one way out of this dilemma: the developed nations must pay the Third World for the
30 expense of preserving its forests.

The strategy I propose involves taxing people in developed nations from 50 cents to five dollars per person each year, depending on the country's wealth. People in the United States, for example, would

pay the maximum amount, contributing about \$1 billion per year. This is equivalent to an
40 increase of about 12 percent in U.S. development assistance programs. The fund, which would total more than \$3 billion annually, should flow through an independent institution such as the World Bank.

In return, the 48 tropical forest nations in Africa, Asia and the Americas would set up a system of 1,000 reserves averaging 247,000
50 acres each (their size would vary widely, of course). These nations would act as custodians of the reserves, which would be inspected annually by an international agency. Each host nation would receive an annual payment based on the area under protection—an average of \$3 million per reserve. If the country
60 failed to maintain the reserve, it would lose the money.

That would be the only string attached, however. Each nation would be able to use its funds as it wished, for reserve protection, agricultural intensification or industrial development, for example, so as to decrease the impact of other economic pressure upon the reserves.

To provide even more incentive,
70 selection of the areas to be included in the reserve system would be up to the host country. This would allow

Continued

governments to choose sites where there are few conflicts over development. Obviously, not all areas with the greatest natural diversity would be chosen; but if we preserved enough land, diversity would take care of itself.

80 The entire system would preserve about 10 percent of the Earth's remaining tropical rain forest. This does not mean that 10 percent is the ideal amount, and that the other 90 percent can be exploited or destroyed. But the proposed plan would at least establish a safety net, ensuring that a gene pool is preserved. At the same time, by
90 saving the world's plant and animal species—two-thirds of which live in tropical rain forests—the rich

nations would also help ensure their own futures; the genetic base preserved would help everyone.

The most serious argument against my plan is that it's impractical. Hard-pressed governments are unlikely to impose yet another tax on their citizens, especially to foster programs in other countries. My
100 only answer is that no other plan has a chance of saving the world's tropical forests. Without short-term economic incentives, deforestation will continue, and we will see a wave of extinctions the likes of which we have never seen before. Yes, it is expensive medicine; but
110 we cannot even fathom the effects of the disease.

Ira Rubinoff
Scientist and Director of the
Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute

- V. Robin is preparing a brief oral report on an environmental issue. Read the first draft of Robin's report, carefully noting her revisions, and answer questions 36 to 42 in your Questions Booklet.

SHOULD WE SAVE THE RAIN FORESTS?

Paragraph 1 Miss Hoskins and fellow students: Two questions that ^{many} ~~most~~ people ask are: "Why worry about the rain forests? How do they ^{affect} ~~have anything to do with~~ me?" I even ^{these questions} ~~asked it myself~~ until ^{an article} ~~I read this story~~ by Ira Rubinoff. We know that ^{the term} ~~"ecology"~~ refers to the interaction of organisms in the environment. Truly, the world is our environment; the more we interfere with the relationships of organisms in their environments, the more we ^{endanger} ~~don't pay attention to~~ our environment ~~in danger~~.

Paragraph 2 What are we supposed to do to help solve the conservation problem? Ira Rubinoff suggests that conservationists might be successful in persuading the people of a Third World nation to ^{set aside} ~~save~~ part of a tropical rain forest for a ^{national} ~~recreational~~ park. That would give them a reason to celebrate—for a while. But then the troubles ^{might} ~~can~~ start, such as poachers killing ~~off~~ the last surviving leopard or ranchers putting their cattle ^{to graze} ~~grazing~~ on damaged land.

Paragraph 3 Where did the conservationists go wrong? Certainly, they can't take large areas of land from people for parks and just say "Thank you." ^{Conservationists must} ~~We have got to~~ compensate the people for the land that they have lost because developing nations need compensation for losing ^{use of} ~~the~~ resources from the conserved land. How can people improve their lives if land is taken from them and they receive nothing for themselves? ^{They must be paid!} ~~Compensation should be considered for these people.~~

Continued

Paragraph
4

But how will the money be obtained? ^{proposes} Well, Ira Rubinoff ~~proposes~~ ^{proposes} taxing the world's developed nations. But the taxing should be ~~done~~ fair; that is, the people of the wealthier nations like the United States would pay ^{the maximum amount of} five dollars per person per year, ~~and that would be the maximum amount of a payment.~~ People in poorer nations would ^{only} ~~only~~ pay fifty cents per person per year. This fund, which could amount to three billion dollars a year, would be administered by the World Bank. The ^{governments} ~~governments~~ of the rain forest countries would ^{choose} ~~choose~~ the areas to be preserved. Probably ^{only} ten percent of the Earth's rain forests would be saved—but those ^{reserves} ~~areas~~ could provide ^{plant stock and animal stock} ~~seeds~~ that could be used in the future.

Paragraph
5

^{admits, however,} ~~In conclusion,~~ Ira Rubinoff ~~says~~ ^{says} that the taxation plan may be impractical because people are already overtaxed, yet his plan seems to be the ^{way} ~~only~~ ^{plan} to save the ^{tropical} world's forests. To return to my first question, [—] “Why worry about the rain forests?” [—] my answer is that many living organisms would be destroyed if their environment is destroyed. In time, that would mean that ^{our} ~~your~~ environment ^{would be} ~~is~~ destroyed too, and what would that do to ^{us} ~~you~~? ^T I guess ^{we} ~~they~~ the choice [!] ~~they~~ have to make is ~~to~~ “Pay up—or die out.”

VI. Questions 43 to 50 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from an autobiography.

from FIRST LIGHT

In this excerpt from his autobiography, the author recounts his childhood experiences in an English village during the autumn of the last year of World War I.

I was awake, I could see, I was happy. I lay looking out of the small green window. The world outside was crimson and on fire. I had never seen it looking like that before.

“Doth?” I said, “what’s happening to them trees?”

5 Dorothy was dressing. She leaned out of the window, slow and sleepy, and the light came through her nightdress like sand through a sieve.

“Nothing’s happening,” she said.

“Yes it is then,” I said. “They’re falling to bits.”

10 Dorothy scratched her dark head, yawning wide, and white feathers floated out of her hair.

“It’s only the leaves droppin’. We’re in autumn now. The leaves always drop in autumn.”

15 Autumn? In autumn. Was that where we were? Where the leaves always dropped and there was always this smell. I imagined it continuing, with no change, for ever, these wet flames of woods burning on and on like the bush of Moses,¹ as natural a part of this newfound land as the eternal snows of the poles. Why had we come to such a place?

Marjorie, who had gone down to help with the breakfast, suddenly came tumbling back up the stairs.

20 “Doth,” she whispered; she seemed excited and frightened; “Doth . . . He’s turned up again. Help on Loll with his clothes and come on down, quick.”

We went down and found him sitting by the fireside, smiling, wet and cold. I climbed up to the breakfast table and stared at him, the stranger. To me he did not so much appear to be a man as a conglomeration of woody things. His face was 25 red and crinkled, brilliant like fungus. There were leaves in his mud-matted hair, and leaves and twigs on his crumbling clothes, and all over him. His boots were like the black pulp you find when you dig under a tree. Mother gave him porridge and bread and he smiled palely at us all.

“It must have been cruel in the wood,” said our Mother.

30 “I’ve got some sacks, ma’am,” he said, spooning his porridge. “They keep out the wet.”

They wouldn’t; they’d suck it up like a wick and wrap him in it.

“You oughtn’t to live like that,” said Mother. “You ought to get back to

Continued

¹bush of Moses—the burning bush from which God spoke to Moses. The bush burned without being destroyed

your home.”

35 “No,” smiled the man. “That wouldn’t do. They’d jump on me before you could say *knife*.”

Mother shook her head sadly, and sighed, and gave him more porridge. We boys adored the look of the man; the girls, fastidious, were more uncertain of him. But he was no tramp or he wouldn’t be in the kitchen. He had four bright
40 medals in his pocket, which he would produce and polish and lay on the table like money. He spoke like nobody else we knew, in fact we couldn’t understand many of his words. But Mother seemed to understand him, and would ask him questions, and look at the photographs he carried in his shirt and sigh and shake her head. He talked something of battles and of flying in the air, and it was all
45 wonderful to us.

He was no man from these parts. He had appeared on the doorstep one early morning, asking for a cup of tea. Our Mother had brought him in and given him a whole breakfast. There had been blood on his face and he had seemed very weak. Now he was in a kitchen with a woman and a lot of children, and his eyes shone
50 brightly, and his whiskers smiled. He told us he was sleeping in the wood, which seemed to me a good idea. And he was a soldier, because Mother had said so.

I knew about war; all my uncles were in it; my ears from birth had been full of the talk of it. Sometimes I used to climb into the basket chair by the fire and close my eyes and see brown men moving over a field in battle. I was three, but I
55 saw them grope and die and felt myself older than they.

This man did not look like a soldier. He had a beard and his khaki was torn. But the girls insisted he was a soldier, and said it in whispers, like a secret. And when he came down to our house for breakfast, and sat hunched by the fire, steaming with damp and coated with leaves and dirt, I thought of him sleeping up
60 there in the wood. I imagined him sleeping, then having a go at the battle, then coming down to us for a cup of tea. He was the war, and the war was up there; I wanted to ask, “How’s the war in that wood?”

But he never told us. He sat drinking his tea, gulping and gasping, the fire drawing the damp out of his clothes as if ghosts were rising from him. When he
65 caught our eyes he smiled from his beard. And when brother Jack shot at him with a spoon, saying, “I’m a sodger,”² he replied softly, “Aye, and you’d make a better one than me, son, any day.”

When he said that, I wondered what had happened to the war. Was he in those rags because he was such a bad soldier? Had he lost the war in the wood?

70 When he didn’t come any more, I knew he had. The girls said some policemen had taken him away in a cart. And Mother sighed and was sad over the poor man.

Laurie Lee

English writer and poet

He was born in Gloucestershire, England in 1914

²sodger—soldier

VII. Questions 51 to 58 in your Questions Booklet are based on this poem.

NOW THAT THE CLOUDS ARE GONE AGAIN

Grandfather sitting across the room
trying to keep from smiling
Weary sodbuster's¹ frame
tapering slender fingers
5 First time he knew
I could play and sing

And only a month before Grandfather died
Old Uncle Allan, who played the fiddle
revealed how the old man played at the dances
10 barrelhouse organ, in the dirty thirties²
while his son was fiddling whisky wild
Laughter rolled out on the winter prairie
in the worst years

Grandad, who warned me, long time past
15 "Never knew a good musician
Be a lawyer, study the law"
A true Canadian
bearing false witness to his talent

So I never told him of my vocation
20 never sent him my book of poems
thinking he would not understand

And now, unsure
of the man who handled the organ keys
with calloused fingers
25 a mickey flask in his vest
Homestead blues pounding through religion
ringing true in the thirties wastes:

30 "we look away
across the plains
and wonder why it never rains
now that the clouds are gone again"

Continued

¹sodbuster—farmer

²dirty thirties—(The Great Depression): Prairie farms faced droughts, dust storms, and grasshopper plagues

And he's gone now, has followed his wife
and stillborn children
into the last dark coulee

35 He never played a bar of his music for me

So I'm left with a ragged fiddle
mouldering away in a cold cellar
A bust up organ gone to seed
in a long forgotten homestead
40 drifted in with sand

Left with a rasping melody
my uncle sings, notes that are spindrift
snatched from the dusty teeth
of the plain's wind

45 A music that comes from the ground
and wounds the hillside yet
Where his sod house lingers
tired of years

Now rusty barbed wire keens³
50 —strummed by that inexorable⁴ element
And only Coyote, shifting partridges
blends his song in a wild melody
that only wild singers can sing

For the last time I held
55 those long fingers
I did not know that music
pulsed from blood to blood

The last time I saw
Grandfather
60 he told me the years were bowing
those wide shoulders
he gave to me

Sid Marty

Alberta poet and writer

He was a warden in Banff National Park between 1966 and 1973

³keens—makes a wailing sound

⁴inexorable—relentless; not to be moved by entreaties or pleas

VIII. Questions 59 to 70 in your Questions Booklet are based on this short story.

FISH STORY

All that winter of 1942 we had hunted the enemy with wooden guns, but now it was June and time to fish. Second grade safely under our belts, I and my best friend, Don Adair, dug two cans of fat worms and hiked to Goose Creek on our own. The stream was roaring back in the canyon, milky and nearly out of its banks. The old man had warned me about this situation: it was spawning season; there wouldn't be many but they might be big.

We worked all afternoon, scrambling through willows, catching clothes and our new gear on branches, wading back and forth across the creek in shallows, our pants chill on goosebump legs. Worm after worm grew pale and spongy in the water, disintegrated or was torn from the sharp steel, bumping along the bottom in the current. We plunged on from one hole to the next, shouting encouragement to each other. Already we were in the peculiar, timeless space that fishermen know. Heat and cold, sun and flies, scratches and sprains—they occur at the perimeter of one's mind. In the still center there is only a pure, excruciating alertness.

I stood on the old two-by-twelve plank that jutted over a deep pool. Farm kids had placed it there for a diving board, weighting the end with a heap of sod. The worm was now threaded on a yellow and red salmon fly—I hoped with this feathered serpent to gain the best of two worlds—and sank quickly. I ignored the small, deceptive tugs caused by the bait tumbling over rocks or submerged roots. At first, in wild anticipation, I had horsed backward and snapped the leader on such snags. But in the course of the afternoon I had grown sensitive to nuances of shock. Now, all at once, the line tightened, then relaxed, then twitched again. The pull was sharp, purposeful. I reeled in and examined the hook. Bare. I began to shake, but managed to impale one of the three worms I had left.

Careful as a young priest, I repeated my cast, exactly. The writhing pink worm vanished again. Again the quick, hard pull. Something strong and alive signaled through the line. I jerked, and again the hook flashed up, bare and glinting wicked in the sun. I don't know how I breathed, or moved my hands to thread on the next-to-last worm. I knew I had never before felt such waves of lust and anxiety. This time, however, nothing happened. Unbearable as it was, I had to accept the possibility that I had failed. The fish was suspicious, or perhaps gone.

I tried again, and again. Nothing. Then I cast once more, in despair—a despair that brought a moment of insight. If he struck again, I would do nothing. I would wait, crafty. I would feed him, gain his confidence. One worm remained

Continued

to me, the chance for a final act of treachery.

He struck. My hands were welded to the pole, my eyes squeezed shut. Somehow I quelled the wild bounding of my heart and did not lash back, though every nerve was howling with the desire to do so. After two hard tugs the line
40 went slack; then came a series of twitches, and I saw that the line was moving through the water, upstream, not rapidly but steadily. Tentative, I leaned back a little. The tip of the rod dipped and the line straightened, taut as a wire. The butt of the rod, braced on my belt buckle, kicked me. I uttered some kind of sound and tried to run backward. I fell off the board where it met the bank, one leg plunging
45 into the icy water, the other splayed out on the grass.

Back and forth across the pool the line zipped, thrumming with an energy that short-circuited my own nerves. I could not make my hand turn the pitiful crank of the reel. I staggered to my feet and continued to run backward, raising my arms over my head. Through the dark water now I could see it, a flashing like a broad
50 knife in the sun. I gave a tremendous heave, falling over flat on my back. I heard a slapping in the water, looked and saw the fish, thrashing, bowing its body almost in a circle, seeming to walk on its tail over the pool until it whopped against the bank. With the intense clarity of a dream, I saw the hook separate from its jaw, the line go slack.

On its own momentum the trout went end-over-end and flopped onto the bank. There it lay for a moment, the gill covers flaring to reveal, within, combs the color of liver. I fought through loops of line as the thick torpedo body flexed and sprang into the air, bounded and twisted laterally through the grass at the very brink. I ran on my knees, my arms wide for the embrace, and fell upon the trout.
60 My nose was buried in mud, and my knees as well; but in between I had trapped that cold, muscular form. The force of it, squirming in the pit of my stomach, was tremendous, as if I had reversed Jonah¹ and swallowed the whale.

The thing was immense. The body was solid, as big as my leg, and the flesh felt hard as a rubber ball. Its jaws gaped fiercely, and the raked teeth, when I ran a
65 finger along them, felt sharp as my father's coping saw. It was also beautiful. On top, the color of a green olive, with flecks of black ink; underneath, pearly white with just a hint of rose; and along the side, small perfect dots of brilliant blue, amber, yellow, and scarlet.

I did not know it at the time, and did not learn it for many years, but this
70 moment—when the trout's life has flared out, leaving the corpse still glowing, changing color from instant to instant—this is a moment of the highest possible understanding, not merely of the art of angling, but of all human endeavor. It is in this moment that one has the chance to know how the needle of sadness and loss will always invade ecstasy, just at its peak.

Continued

¹Jonah—Old Testament prophet who was swallowed by a “great fish”

75 I screamed, not for salvation from this awful truth, but to summon Don Adair to witness Leviathan.²

Don-n-n-ee-ee! Don-n-n-ee-EEEE! Lookit!

80 He burst through the bushes, dead leaves in his hair, sunburned and damp and sullen. One glimpse of his face and I felt myself tipping down a long slide away from the pure and poignant thrill of capture. I jabbered and gesticulated; he wowed and shook his head; we speculated on the dimensions of the fish, all the way up to two feet. But something was wrong, and both of us were quickly subdued. Later in the afternoon he caught his own, smaller but not by much, very respectable. Otherwise, our friendship might not have survived.

85 The lesson was driven home when we tramped happily back down the highway. A highway, in those days, was a two-lane blacktop usually empty but for the shimmering black pools of mirage. When we passed the Richfield station on the edge of town Mrs. Ross came out onto the concrete, hands on hips, mouth distending. "Floyd!" she hollered. "Floyd, come see what these kids got! Lord
90 amighty!" She asked our ages, though she knew them well enough, told us we were fine little men, such fish and only so high. Shy and proud, we hoisted the dangling bodies, stiffened now in a partial curl. Floyd emerged from the dark cave of the station, wrench in hand, khaki overalls spotted with grease. He regarded us, his wife yammering away on one side, eviscerated cars and trucks
95 behind him.

"Pretty nice," he grunted. "Goose Creek?"

"Back of Carlock's."

"Worms?"

100 "Yeah." We waited, yearning to go on and relate everything, just as it had happened, yet held back by some awkwardness of new, sudden growth. We were about to learn still more about the brotherhood of sportsmen, about how the chase can bring us closer, yet make us aware of the chasms of time and choice that divide us all.

105 "Shame you let 'em dry out like that," Floyd said, and turned to stride back into his cave.

Will Baker

Contemporary American writer

He is a professor of English at the

University of California at Davis, California

²Leviathan—a monstrous sea creature mentioned in the Old Testament

Credits

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